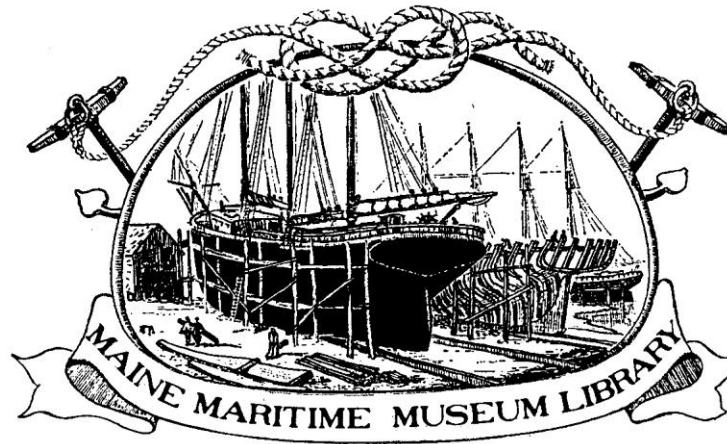


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**Inventory for
Manuscript Collection
MS – 10**

**Captain Thomas P. Dunton Papers
1848-1859**

by
Elisabeth Meier
February 2018

½ box
.25 linear feet
Accession # 65.1100

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Abstract

Dunton, Thomas P., Captain (1823-1874)

Papers, 1848-1859

½ box

Captain based in Gloucester, Massachusetts

This collection contains receipts, accounts, bills of lading, scattered correspondence, and other legal and business papers related to Captain Thomas P. Dunton's commands. Most of the documents date from the years that Dunton (1823-1874), a native of Westport, Maine, sailed coasting schooners from Gloucester, Massachusetts. There are very few personal papers in this collection.

Gift of Mrs. Philip Harriman.

MS-010. Accession #65.1100.

Finding aid in repository.

Added entries—people:

Dunton, Thomas P.

Tarr, Moses

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels):

Belle (two-mast schooner)

Boston Light (schooner)

General Scott (two-mast schooner)

Gloucester (schooner)

Narcissa (schooner)

Panama (two-mast schooner)

Ruth (two-mast schooner)

Victor (schooner)

Added entries—places:

Gloucester (MA)

Added entries—key terms:

Coal Trade

Coasters

Coastwise shipping

Fish Trade

Grain Trade

Schooners

Acquisition

This collection was given to the museum by Mrs. Philip Harriman in 1965.

Restrictions

There are no restrictions on this collection.

Physical Condition

The documents are mostly in good condition. Some are fragile along old folds; others are stained from past use.

Historical Note

Captain Thomas P. Dunton, son of James and Lucy Dunton, was born on Westport Island, Maine, in 1823. He lived in Westport and Woolwich until the early 1850s, listing himself as a fisherman in the 1850 census. While in Woolwich, he commanded a number of local vessels, including the *Nequasset* (schooner), *Roman* (schooner), *General Scott* (two-mast schooner), and *Panama* (two-mast schooner).

In the early 1850s, Captain Thomas P. Dunton moved to Gloucester, Massachusetts and entered the coasting trade. In Gloucester, Dunton frequently worked with local merchant Moses Tarr to arrange and consign cargoes. As in Maine, Dunton's Gloucester vessels were small ones, averaging about seventy tons, and his voyages were mostly local. His commands included the *Belle* (two mast schooner) and *Narcissa* (schooner).

In 1850, Thomas Dunton married Julia P. Brooks (1826-1889), also of Westport. They had three children: Lillian (1852-1902), Bennie W. (1857-1858), and Clara B. (1858-1859).

After 1860, Captain Dunton took charge of the *Julia A. Decker* (two-mast schooner) and began sailing to the Caribbean and Honduras. He died in 1874, and is reportedly buried in South America.

Scope and Content Note

The bulk of this collection consists of receipts, accounts, bills of lading, bills of sale, and other business documents related to the years that Thomas P. Dunton lived in and sailed from Gloucester. A few items relate to earlier vessels from Woolwich. As such, it provides an account of the business handled by small New England coasting schooners in the decade before the Civil War. The voyages recorded here range from Norfolk, Virginia, to Battle Harbor, Labrador, but the majority covered shorter distances. Cargoes listed include fish, grain, clothing, foodstuffs, coal, oil, tar, and grindstones.

There is very little correspondence in this collection. The few letters present (in folder 1) shed light on Captain Dunton's relationship with merchant Moses Tarr and on finding sailors for local trips. Personal papers are equally scanty, but include receipts for taxes paid by Dunton in Gloucester.

Box and Folder List

Box	Folder	
1	1	Papers and accounts, Captain Thomas P. Dunton, 1853-1859
	2	Papers, <i>Boston Light</i> (schooner), <i>General Scott</i> (two-mast schooner), <i>Gloucester</i> (schooner), <i>Panama</i> (two-mast schooner), <i>Ruth</i> (two-mast schooner), and <i>Victor</i> (schooner), 1848-1856
	3	Papers, <i>Belle</i> (two-mast schooner), 1854-1857
	4	Accounts, <i>Belle</i> (two-mast schooner), 1854-1858
	5	Papers and accounts, <i>Narcissa</i> (schooner), 1858-1859